

## MYTHOLOGY REGARDING MANNING JOHNSON – rev. July 2021

[ernie1241@aol.com](mailto:ernie1241@aol.com)

Manning Johnson's FBI files reveal the following FBI analysis of his public testimony.

In December 1958, Manning Johnson testified at hearings conducted by the Arkansas Legislative Council Committee which was investigating possible links between communism and racial unrest in Arkansas. Johnson previously testified in March 1957 at hearings conducted by the Louisiana Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation.

The Louisiana Committee was created to defend and preserve segregation in Louisiana.

The FBI summary concerning Johnson's Arkansas testimony pointed out that **"...he is not in a position to speak authoritatively regarding the present tactics and activities of the Communist Party in the Negro field as he was dropped from the Communist Party in 1939. It would appear Johnson was attempting to prove or infer that the present racial unrest is the result of Communist Party policies formulated in the 1920s and 30s. This premise is not supported by data in Bufiles; however it is observed that the Communist Party, at every opportunity, has attempted to capitalize on the situation...Johnson's testimony adds nothing to our knowledge in this field."** [FBI-HQ 62-105198, serial #8, page 1; SAC Little Rock to J. Edgar Hoover, regarding Arkansas Legislative Council Committee; also FBI-Little Rock file 44-341].

In March 1957 when Johnson testified before the Louisiana Legislative Committee, he declared that the NAACP **"has become a vehicle of the Communist Party designed to overthrow the government of the United States."**

Johnson's comment (below) is almost identical to the malicious propaganda produced/endorsed by white supremacist groups in the United States.

**"The Communist Party has very successfully infiltrated the foremost Negro organization in this country. It is not exactly a Negro organization. It is a mixed breed of some type I will attempt to describe. But, anyhow, the Communists are working in and have infiltrated and are working through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Now, the reason the CP has concentrated on the NAACP is because the NAACP in recent years has become one of the most influential Negro—or I should say mixed breed organizations in the country. They see in that organization the possibility of developing a national liberation movement, particularly in the south...The liberation movement, as I understand it and know it from training and experience in the Communist Party, means national Negro rebellion in the south stretching from across the old black belt, or the old cotton belt of the south...This is where they hope to develop this national liberation movement. Where they hope to set up this Negro Republic."** [*Subversion In Racial Unrest—An Outline of a Strategic Weapon To Destroy The Governments of Louisiana and the United States*], Part II, March 6-9, 1957, page 155.]

With respect to Manning Johnson's derogatory comments regarding the NAACP as a **"Communist front"**, the FBI observed that in response to an inquiry by the *Pittsburgh PA Courier* newspaper in April 1957, the Department of Justice informed the Courier that...

**..."the Department informed the NAACP that recent statements made by Johnson attempting to link the NAACP with the Communist Party did not reflect the views nor findings of the Justice Department; that Johnson was not one of its employees as reportedly cited in various newspaper accounts; and that Johnson in no way was connected with the Department nor did he speak for the Department."** [FBI-HQ 62-105198, serial #8, page 6; SAC Little Rock to J.

Edgar Hoover, regarding Arkansas Legislative Council Committee; also FBI-Little Rock file 44-341].

Other FBI informants inside the Communist Party (who later became paid speakers for the John Birch Society) flatly contradicted Manning Johnson. For example, Julia C. Brown pointed out during one interview:

Julia stated that Communists had **"little or no influence"** within the NAACP and she concluded that:

**"I'm 100 percent with the NAACP and I think they are doing a wonderful job. Top government officials are aware that the NAACP is legal and is working in the American way for first class citizenship for all Americans."** [*Ebony* magazine, "I Was A Spy For The FBI", March 1961, p102].

Another FBI informant inside the Party (Lola Belle Holmes, also a paid JBS speaker) made the same report to the FBI about the NAACP.]

In her 1966 memoir (*I Testify*), published by the Birch Society, Julia observed:

**"Many times I have been asked if the NAACP was a Communist front organization. I have been able to say, truthfully, that, so far as I could discern, it was not. Indeed the great Walter White, executive secretary of the NAACP prior to his death, fought Communism with might and main. Older NAACP leaders have been equally fierce in their opposition to the Red conspiracy. But it has only been by dint of great effort on the part of these loyal men and women that the Party has been thwarted in its attempts to completely dominate the NAACP."** ... [Julia Brown, *I Testify: My Years As An FBI Undercover Agent*, Western Islands, 1966, pages 124-125.

Julia also mentioned that the wife of one prominent CPUSA official **"hated the NAACP as did all other Communists."** (Ibid, page 125]

Julia estimated that the Communist Party in the U.S. was only 1% black and she then observed **"It is difficult to recruit a Negro for Communism because he is naturally religious."** [Note: According to FBI Security Index stats, about 11-12% of SI subjects were black. In the period from 1955-1963, the number of blacks on the Security Index was consistently in the range of 1450-1550 out of 12,000-13,000 listees.]

Like other FBI informants, Julia **often** tried to convince audiences that she had unique expert knowledge about many internal security matters even though she did NOT possess that expertise because it was *outside her personal experience and knowledge* --- which is why the FBI came to the conclusion that Julia and Lola Belle Holmes had become **"professional anti-Communists"** after associating with the Birch Society and they made false or misleading statements just to continue making a lucrative living from receiving their JBS paychecks.

The FBI concluded that:

**"Despite the recurring allegations by Southern political leaders that the racial situation is Communist-inspired, our investigation of the Communist Party and the over-all racial situation in this country has reflected that in practically all instances, with relatively few exceptions, racial incidents in this country have not been caused or inspired by Communist Party elements."** [FBI-HQ 62-105198, serial #8, page 5; SAC Little Rock to J. Edgar Hoover, regarding Arkansas Legislative Council Committee; also FBI-Little Rock file 44-341].

For additional details see:

<https://archive.org/details/arkansaslegislativecouncilcommitteehq62105198/mode/2up>

J. Edgar Hoover grew so weary of the falsehoods disseminated by Birch Society speakers and writers, that he issued the following statement:

**“Let me emphasize that the American civil rights movement is *not*, and has *never* been dominated by the communists—because the overwhelming majority of civil rights leaders in this country, both Negro and white, have recognized and rejected communism as a menace to the freedoms of all.”** [J. Edgar Hoover speech, 12/12/64, “*Our Heritage of Greatness*”, page 7 - Hoover speech before Pennsylvania Society and the Society of Pennsylvania Women; bold emphasis on “not” and “never” appears in original document].

For additional comments by Hoover, the FBI and other security entities see:

<https://archive.org/details/government-agency-praise-for-civil-rights-movement>

For much more historical detail regarding the Birch Society’s 6-Decade attack upon our civil rights movement and its leaders, see:

<https://archive.org/details/john-birch-society-vs-civil-rights-movement-249pp/mode/2up>

In April 1951 Manning Johnson admitted lying under oath during the sedition trial of Steve Nelson.

Manning Johnson's 1954 personal memoir (*Color, Communism, Common Sense*) was originally published by Alliance, Inc. in New York City which was a publishing house operated by Archibald B. Roosevelt (Archie was the son of Theodore Roosevelt and he later became a John Birch Society member. The JBS published Manning Johnson’s memoir in 1963 as an *American Opinion* reprint.)

This same Archibald Roosevelt wrote a letter to Verne Kaub in 1962 which described the political situation in New York. Roosevelt told Kaub that “*professional do-gooders*” planned **“to be elected by being extreme pro-negro...By extreme I really mean special privileges for the negro, who in most cases is certainly below the average white man in intelligence.”** [9/20/62 letter from Archibald B. Roosevelt to Verne P. Kaub, Madison WI].

THAT is how Birchers used Manning Johnson but behind his back they adopted and circulated racist arguments.

I have posted Manning Johnson's FBI files on Internet Archive for anybody who wants to review them -- along with the FBI's very caustic analyses of his post-FBI lies and misrepresentations—some of which are discussed below.

Interested parties should also review the FBI file captioned ***“Department Committee on Security Witnesses”*** [FBI-HQ file 100-418015 and FBI-New York City 100-26864] because they go into mind-numbing details re: the lies and misrepresentations of Manning Johnson.

In February 1957, the Interdepartmental Committee on Security Witnesses considered Johnson’s case and decided **not** to utilize him as a witness for the Government in any future cases because of his dishonesty. Johnson and INS informant Leonard Patterson made charges against Dr. Ralph Bunche (in 1950, Bunche became the first African American Nobel Peace Prize winner) but they were found to be non-credible by the Loyalty Review Board.

Johnson’s Attack on University of Washington Professor Melvin Rader

**“Johnson testified that a University of Washington professor attended a Communist Party or Communist school in Kingston NY for six weeks in the summer of 1938. But documentary**

evidence showed beyond any question or doubt that the professor was not in New York state during that entire period...Johnson testified against Dr. Ralph Bunche of the UN. A loyalty board of the UN itself heard the testimony and unanimously cleared Dr. Ralph Bunche." [FBI HQ file 100-55627, 3/3/55 memo from Special Agent in Charge of New York City field office to J. Edgar Hoover re: Manning Johnson].

Rader stated that he never met Johnson although Johnson claimed to have met Rader several times. In summer of 1948, the Washington State Un-American Activities Committee chaired by Albert Canwell conducted a public hearing into "subversive activities" at the University of Washington. At this hearing, one witness (George Hewitt) accused Rader of having been a Communist Party member. Hewitt also claimed that he had been Rader's teacher at a highly secret Communist school at Briehl's Farm, near Kingston, New York for a period of about six weeks in the Summer of 1938.

Rader denied this charge under oath and also stated he had never been in New York State. Hewitt was indicted for perjury but he resisted extradition. Then, Manning Johnson signed an affidavit on September 20, 1948 in which he declared about Rader that **"he personally remembered me 'as having been present at the Communist Party school held at Briehl's Farm near Kingston NY in the summer of 1938' and that he further met me at 'Communist Party headquarters, 50 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, New York in the executive offices on the 9<sup>th</sup> floor on various occasions in the Summer of 1938'."**

On May 12, 1949 there was a habeas corpus hearing in Judge Aaorn J. Levy's courtroom in New York City. Johnson was shown a picture of Melvin Rader and he again testified (under oath) that **"he had seen the person pictured 'a number of times, going in and out of the office' at the Party's national headquarters in the Summer of 1938'."**

On cross-examination, Johnson was asked twice if he was **"positive that this is the picture of the man you saw up at Briehl's school..."** and Johnson's answer was **"I'm positive"**.

Records of the University of Washington Comptroller's office proved that Rader taught summer school in 1938 until July 20. Affidavits from the former owner and care-taker of Canyon Creek Lodge resort near Seattle confirmed that Rader, his wife, and one child were guests at that Lodge for about a month in the summer of 1938. Rader's signature on the Register was also produced. A rent receipt book located by the owner of the Lodge contained the record of Rader paying rent for a cabin for August through September 5, 1938.

Dr. Carl Jensen, a Seattle eye specialist, produced records showing that on August 15, 1938 (in the middle of the period when Johnson and Hewitt claimed Rader was in New York State), the doctor gave Rader an eye exam and a prescription for new glasses. Voting records in the City Clerk office of Seattle, showed that Rader voted in Seattle in their primary election of September 13, 1938.

After conducting an investigation, the Attorney General of Washington state issued an official Report on May 5, 1950, which concluded that:

**"The only reasonable conclusion that can be reached...is that George Hewitt did not tell the truth."** And, of course, Manning Johnson's testimony is equally suspect.

The aforementioned FBI file captioned *Interdepartmental Committee on Security Witnesses* also reported that:

**"It is noted that Manning Johnson admitted under oath that he had lied not only in the case against Steve Nelson but also when he was a witness in the suit brought against the**

**International Workers Order in NYC in that he did not tell the truth about his previous connections with the FBI.”**

The New York City FBI file on Johnson includes this content:

Manning Johnson testified against Harry Bridges. Johnson testified that Bridges had been present at a Communist convention in New York City. Johnson gave the date, the time and the place where he allegedly saw Harry Bridges at the Communist convention.

But there was irrefutable evidence presented that Harry Bridges was at a Longshore meeting on union business in Stockton, California!

In another case, Johnson testified in the trial of Ben Gold, President of the International Fur and Leather Workers Union. Gold was on trial for allegedly falsely signing a Taft-Hartley anti-communist affidavit.

Johnson testified about Gold's attendance at a May 27, 1938 Communist Party convention and he stated Gold was a main speaker at a Madison Square Garden rally which concluded the convention. However, evidence was produced which indicated that Gold addressed two mass meetings of fur workers at two different New York City locations at the same time he supposedly (according to Johnson) was at Madison Square Garden.

During the Gold trial, Johnson also testified that only Communists who were close supporters of the Communist Party were permitted to speak at May Day celebrations or at other “Communist dominated” events but under cross examination he acknowledged that an **anti**-Communist official of the Retail Union and Charles Zimmerman of the ILGWU who both had been expelled from the Party were among the speakers. [FBI-New York City file 65-10519, serial #692]

There are other examples of Johnson's disingenuousness. ONLY credulous/gullible people don't understand the relevant history re: people like Manning Johnson.

Informants supply RAW information of varying quality. The information provided can be accurate or useful but often informant reports are flawed, incomplete, mistaken or just nothing more than gossip or hearsay or even outright falsehoods.

But many informants (like Manning Johnson) earned a lucrative living by offering to testify for the compensation it provided OR they just enjoyed the public recognition they achieved from giving speeches or writing about their alleged expertise.

Groups like the Birch Society never bothered to perform due diligence to evaluate the information provided by people like Manning Johnson --- especially when informants made comments which did NOT conform to JBS ideology.

Manning Johnson wrote an article in 1952 for a national Catholic monthly publication in which Johnson attempted to explain why some black Americans were seduced by the Communist Party. In his article, Manning wrote about “*Big Tom*” Williams:

**“He was born and reared in Jim Crow surroundings which in time he grew to hate. The narrowly circumscribed life based upon race hate and the belief that he had no rights which a white man was bound to respect rankled and embittered him...After graduation he married a fine and attractive girl and would have settled down, but he could not harden himself to the Jim Crow surroundings as had so many others of his race. The vivid recollections of a race riot in which white hoodlums indiscriminately attacked Negroes, burned their homes, wrecked their businesses, and the Roman Holiday atmosphere that prevailed when one of his neighbors was dragged from his home and lynched, left a deep impression on him so that no amount of**

persuasion could stop him from moving his family North to 'freedom'." [Manning Johnson: "Big Tom, The Red", *The Sign* magazine, December 1952]

Significantly, the Birch Society never informed its members about the type of experience described above by Johnson which was faced by many African Americans.

Nor did the JBS ever correctly inform its members about the reasons why African Americans (or other racial or religious minorities) became interested in radical left organizations, i.e., why radicalism appealed to certain segments of our society—including minorities. For relevant background about this matter, see the 309-page December 1951 FBI training monograph entitled "*Reasons Why People Accept and Reject Communism*". In particular, see the section about African American author, Richard Wright (pages 71-76).

Another African American Birch Society paid speaker, George S. Schuyler, accurately wrote about the REAL situation faced by African Americans:

**"THE WHITE Citizens Council which has branches or cells everywhere, controls by terror such states as Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and to a lesser extent, Virginia. It has castigated the Supreme Court in general and the Chief Justice in particular. It has defied and disrupted the operation of the laws of the land. It has used threats and vicious economic reprisals. It is as undemocratic as the John Birch Society and it exacts large sums of money from its followers. It has become a legal arm of Mississippi's Government. Why no furore to investigate the White Citizens Council?" [4/22/61 George Schuyler column in *Pittsburgh PA Courier*].**

By contrast, the Birch Society INVITED and welcomed members of the White Citizens Councils movement into the JBS as members, as paid speakers and authors, and as paid JBS Coordinators.